The Mummy

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The Mummy

by Ishxallxgood

Summary

Adam Raki is a librarian, and he's damn proud. He has been obsessed with Ancient Egypt and the Legend of Imhannitep and his consort Anck-Will-Namun since he was a child. When his sister comes across a priceless artifact, Adam cannot resist the pull of Hamunaptra to uncover the secrets plaguing his dreams since he was a child.

The Mummy (1999) Hannigram Spacedogs AU written for REEL Hannibal

Chapter 1

Thebes, City of the Waiting Dead. Crown jewel of Pharaoh Matti I. Home of Imhannitep, Pharaoh's high priest, keeper of the dead; birthplace of Anck-Will-Namun, Pharaoh's most prized possession.

Anck-Will-Namun, was said to have possessed a beauty which transcended the gods and a mind so unique he could possess the mind of anyone he met. So enamored was Pharaoh, that he elected to hide Anck-Will-Namun away, deep within the depths of the temple, under the care of his most trusted subject, Imhannitep. Yet unbeknownst to Pharaoh, was the fact that of all his subjects, of all the people in his land and the ones beyond, Imhannitep was the only one for whom Anck-Will-Namun found interesting.

For years they remained, hidden away in the temple; their love flourishing in peaceful bliss. Over the years Imhannitep had slain countless men in the name of Pharaoh, for gazing upon the beauty of Anck-Will-Namun. It was then rumored that Imhannitep had then feasted on their flesh; feeding the hearts raw to Anck-Will-Namun, in a declaration of his love.

Upon hearing these rumors, Pharaoh himself descended upon Thebes, and in a fit of jealous rage and stole Imhannitep away. In the depths of his temple, Pharaoh strung him up by the neck, bound his arms to a board and bled him by his wrists; all in a reminder that Anck-Will-Namun was his.

To save his love, Anck-Will-Namun sank a blade into Pharaoh's back. With his hands, he tore Pharaoh apart and rescued his beloved from imminent death. But Pharaoh's bodyguards were close on their trail, and to avoid capture, Anck-Will-Namun threw them off a cliff into the Nile.

For eight months the Captain of Pharaoh's bodyguards, Pazzi, tracked them. And when they could run no more, for their love, they were willing to risk life itself. Cornered by Pazzi and his men, Anck-Will-Namun demanded that Imhannitep save himself for he was the only one who could bring him back. Imhannitep refused, but his priests understood, and he watched in abject horror as Anck-Will-Namun sunk a blade into his own heart.

For his love, Imhannitep dared to anger the gods by going deep into the temple, where he took the black Book of the Dead from its holy resting place. Anck-Will-Namun's soul had been sent to the dark Underworld, his vital organs removed and placed in five sacred canopic jars.

With the help of his priests, Imhannitep was able to perform the ceremony necessary to call back his beloved's soul, but Pazzi and his men had followed him and stopped him before the ritual was complete. Imhannitep's priests were condemned to be mummified alive; as for Imhannitep, he was condemned to endure the Hom Dai, the worst of all ancient curses. One so horrible it had never been done before.

He was to remain sealed inside his sarcophagus, to be undead for all eternity. The Medjai would never allow him to be released. For he would arise a walking disease, a plague upon

mankind, an unholy flesh-eater with the strength of the ages, power over the sands, and the glory of invincibility. For centuries, men and armies fought over this city not knowing what evil lay beneath it; and we, the Medjai, the descendants of Pharaoh's sacred bodyguards, kept watch.

“Adam! There you are!”

“Hello, Beverly.” Lowering the document, Adam shifts over slightly making room for his sister as he sits tucked between the two sarcophaguses in the Eastern wing.

“Jack's been stomping through the whole museum looking for you.”

“I know,” he says with a sigh, gently setting the document aside. “I sort of made a mess in the library.”

“Uh oh.” Beverly squeezes in next to him, careful to not disturb the aging paper. “What did you do now?”

“It was an accident,” he says, managing to keep his voice steady as he fidgets with his fingers.

“How bad of an accident?”

He heaves a sigh and looks up long enough to briefly catch Beverly’s eye before dropping his gaze to her shoulder. “I knocked down all the stacks in the library.”

Beverly blinks back at him, waiting for the punchline, knowing one would not come. Adam doesn’t lie, he may joke from time to time, but Adam would never lie. Letting out a lot whistle, Beverly collapses against him. “How?"

Adam shakes his head. He doesn't want to talk about how it happened. He's not even quite sure he knows himself. He always manages to make a mess of things, even when he was just trying his best.

"You know what? Forget it," Beverly says wrapping an arm loosely around him. "Jack will get over it, he always does. He's all bark and no bite. You know he adores you." Adam isn't so sure about the adoring part, but he did know that Jack is relatively harmless. Sure his yelling hurts Adam's ears, but Jack is Harlan's brother, and at the very least, he knows Harlan adores him. And Jack isn’t going to fire him, as this job is a favor to Harlan and their dad.

Beverly gives him another squeeze before releasing him to reach for her satchel. "In the meantime, little bro, I have just the thing to take your mind off of that.”

“Oh no, not another worthless trinket, Beverly.”

“No, trust me Adam, it’s different this time.” Adam sighs, his eyes tracking her hand as she reaches into her satchel to retrieve a small octagonal box. It fits snugly in the palm of her hand and Adam’s brows furrow in contemplation as he catches the engravings etched onto its surface.

“Where did you get this?” He asks, gingerly lifting the box from her hand to examine it further.

“In a dig down in Thebes.”

"Beverly," Adam says accusingly, as he continues to turn the box over in his hands. "You were in Thebes two weeks ago and lamented the fact that you, and I quote 'found jack shit.'"

Beverly laughs, eyes twinkling with mischief as she leans closer, watching Adam's movements carefully. "What do you want me to say, little bro? That I swiped it off some thug on the street?"

"Beverly!" Adam exclaims, accidentally twisting the base. The ancient mechanisms springs to life and the device clicks, unfurling like a flower, revealing a hidden compartment with an ancient papyrus tucked inside. "I think you found something, or rather the person you stole this from found something."

Adam frowns as he carefully lifts the papyrus. It was old. Older than anything he has ever handled, and a voice inside him that sounds like their father insists that he should stop handling it and give it to Jack. He ignores it though, and hands Beverly back the box so he can focus on unfolding the papyrus.

It takes him a moment. The writing is faded, the papyrus on the crux of crumbling, but when he finally sees it, he can't help the gasp which escapes him. "Beverly," Adam whispers, because this, *this* is the best kept secret of the millennium. "This is a map to Hamunaptra."

"Seriously?"

Adam is afraid to touch the papyrus again, it is so fragile, and they *need* it. *He* needs it. It holds the key to every dream he’s had since he was ten. The hidden city of Hamunaptra, burial place to the one and only Imhannitep.

When they were younger, their mother used to tell them stories of Hamunaptra. Of the vast treasures to be found there for it was the resting place of Pharaohs and all their wealth. Of all the stories, it was the one of Imhannitep, the three thousand year old mummy, who would revisit the Earth as a curse if he were ever to be released, that had captured Adam’s attention. Adam had instantly been drawn to the stories of Imhannitep. Of his daunting feats and impossible conquests. Of the monuments he built and the medical advances he had made. Imhannitep was a man of wonder, and some would say sorcery. He captured the hearts of everyone he met, and for a time was Pharaoh’s most trusted advisor. Yet, it was the descriptions of the beautiful displays he used to make with the corpses of the so-called rude which fascinated Adam the most.

The day he discovered the stories of Imhannitep’s consort, Anck-Will-namun, the dreams began. Dreams of a temple, with halls of alabaster stone, stories etched into their walls, and a man, more beautiful than life itself, holding him in his arms. In his dreams they were always together. Walking the halls of the temple, talking of teacups and time. There were times though, when he would dream of rivers of blood, taking a bite out of a still beating heart and

being filled with an unspeakable *love* . He would then wake hard and aching, hands reaching out for a ghost of a man who wasn’t there.

Adam never understood his dreams, they felt like they were from some other life. Like a memory of a far away place, but they always circled back to Imhannitep. Sometimes he could still feel the name on his lips. *Imhannitep* .

"Beverly, you have to give this back," he whispers, almost reverently. The box sits heavy on her lap, the map making his fingers burn.

"What? Are you crazy, Adam?" Beverly hisses. " *This* is a map to Hamun-fucking-aptra. We could be rich, Adam! We could be famous! My life's work could actually account for *something* ! We can't just give it back!"

Beverly is right, he knows she’s right. Finding Hamunaptra would mean all those things. Finding Hamunaptra would make them richer than the King, but more importantly, they might find *Imhannitep* , and the thought terrifies and excites him. He knows better than to keep something like this though. It isn’t right, especially since he *knows* it was stolen from someone else. "It's not right, Beverly, and you know it. It rightfully belongs to the person you stole this from, *they're* the ones who deserve the fame and fortune, not us."

"He was a thug, Adam," she protests, "trust me, he probably stole it from someone else."

"Still," Adam insists, "it's not right." He glances at the ancient map again, he knows what they should do, but he is drawn to it. Like the city is calling for him, which is preposterous, because it's just an ancient piece of papyrus, but there's something about it. Something that is screaming at him to go, to follow the faded drawings, find Hamunaptra and unearth its secrets, curses be damned.

"Adam Raki, so help me god, get your ass out here! I know you're there."

Adam yelps as Harlan's booming voices travels across the room. He folds the papyrus as quickly as he can, wincing as a part of it crumbles under his hands.

"Shit," Beverly curses, helping Adam put what was left of the papyrus back into the box before snapping it shut and shoving it back into her bag. "We have to get out of here, you're dead if he finds you."

"I know," Adam says, scrambling to gather his papers as they crawl their way to the far end of the sarcophagus and pick their way between artifacts to the exit. He tries not to think about the state of the one and only map to Hamunaptra, but even so, he knows that a good section of it got destroyed in their haste.

Adam doesn't have to say anything when they make their way out of the museum. He can see it on her face that Beverly is equally aware of the state of the map.

"Now what?"

"What do you mean, 'now what?'" Adam replies, guiding her toward the marketplace. "You know, now what. Now we go find the guy you stole the box off of and hope he knows how to get to Hamunaptra."

Beverly sighs, reluctant to agree, but Adam knows that she knows that he's right. He's always right, well ninety eight percent of the time he's right, they chose to ignore the two percent.

When they finally make it to the stocks, the man is nothing like Adam had imagined him to be. All Beverly had said was, *thug,* he can't imagine why she'd leave out breathtakingly gorgeous. Sure, he's ragged, dirty, and possibly feral, but he is the most beautiful man Adam has ever seen.

"You!" The man screams, banging against the bars as he points an accusatory finger at Beverly, "you dirty little cunt!"

"Hey!" Adam exclaims, stomping forward angrily to slap at the outstretched hand. "You don't talk to my sister like that! She might have stolen from you, but you don't have any right to go around slinging that word at her. She's right you know, you're nothing more than a common thug."

The man bristles, attention turning towards Adam before he frowns. He stares at Adam for a moment, his eyes searing and yet for the first time in his life, Adam could not look away. He is uncomfortable, exposed, and there is a scream threatening to bubble up inside of him, and then the man drops his gaze. His whole demeanor deflates as he retracts his arm and rubs at the spot Adam hit.

Adam is seething, blood still boiling, because how dare this hooligan talk to his sister like that, to *anyone* like that. It's just wrong. And disrespectful. And rude. He has half a mind to turn around and leave when the man *apologizes* .

“Excuse me, what?” Adam asks, blinking in confusion.

“I said I’m sorry, that was uncalled for,” the man says, looking up at Adam through his low hanging bangs.

Adam fights the urge to brush them aside stroke the man’s face. Instead, he takes a hesitant step forward and crouches down so he’s level with the man. He is inexplicably drawn to him, and wants nothing more than to run his hands through dirty hair and pull him into a kiss. To taste and to devour.

Clearing his throat, Adam pushes those thoughts from his mind and stares at the blotch of ink on the man’s neck. “Apology accepted,” he says, gesturing for Beverly to give him the box. “We were actually coming to return this to you, and well, ask you where you got it.”

The man narrows his eyes and eyes the box as Beverly passes it to him. He grins, eyes landing on Adam before leaning forward and gestures for him to move closer. “Hamunaptra,” he whispers, loud enough for Beverly to hear.

“Bullshit,” Beverly says taking a step forward and dropping a hand protectively onto Adam’s shoulder. “Nobody knows where Hamunaptra is located.”

“Well technically,” Adam says turning to face her, “we do, well did, until the map crumpled.”

The man barks out a laugh, startling Adam. “Gorgeous, trust me, I’ve been there. It’s where I got the box.”

“Could you take us there?”

The man’s smile grows a little wider, and before Adam can register what is happening, strong hands grab him by the jaw and his is pulled into a kiss. The kiss is wet, and rough, and honestly off putting, but as the man releases him, he finds himself chasing those lips. “You get me out of here, gorgeous,” the man says letting go of his face, “and I’ll fly you to the moon and back, if that’s what you want.”

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

They start making their way to Hamunaptra. Adam starts getting more intense visions.

Chapter Notes

As promised, more.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Adam stares at the boat they are supposed to be boarding. It is teeming with people and for the fifth time that morning he wonders if it would be possible to charter a private boat instead. Of course, he knows the answer is no. They don't have nearly enough money to do that. They barely had enough money to finance this journey as is.

“Hello, gorgeous.”

Adam yelps and nearly jumps out of his skin. He had been dreaming of ever since the day at the stocks, and now, it is whispered so close to his ear he can almost feel the expel of breath. He turns, knowing that the man would be standing too close and yet not entirely close enough. He thinks of that kiss. That kiss that he most certainly had more than one sexual fantasies of.

“Hello, Nigel,” he says in response, all other words escaping him as he takes in the man before him. Clean shaven and neatly put together. Crisp black shirt and slacks and his hair falling just so, swept to one side. Adam resists the urge to run his fingers through that hair. To tug on it and pull the man back into another, hopefully less sloppy kiss. “You kissed me. Why did you kiss me?”

"I was going to die in an hour," Nigel says, eyes dropping to the ground as he runs a hand through his hair. Adam is transfixed on the hand. The way it sweeps through ash blonde hair. Adam can't help but wonder if it feels as soft as it looks, like silk slipping through his fingers. "I figured I’d sneak a peak at what heaven must taste like as I sure as fuck wasn't gonna go there."

"Oh," Adam breathes in a mix of disappointment and elation. On one hand the kiss clearly didn't mean anything to Nigel, but on the other hand, he is comparing the thought of kissing him to tasting heaven. Sure, the idiom doesn't make a lot of sense, but the sentiment is felt.

“Come on you love birds, we’re going to miss the boat.”

“What?” Adam exclaims, shaking himself from his stupor. It is silly, getting lost in the way a man's hand travels through his hair. In the way a man tastes, especially a man like *Nigel.* Dirty (albeit, not anymore), crass (although, the way he curses sent shivers down his spine), rude (even though he had been perfectly polite since he arrived, and even called Adam *gorgeous* , which he certainly doesn't feel like he is at the moment. Especially standing next to *Nigel* .) Taking a step back and away from Nigel, Adam frowns, fingers tapping furiously at his thigh. "We are not birds, and most certainly not in love. I don’t even know this man.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Beverly says, tossing his bag at him, “and you most certainly didn’t think about that kiss continuously for the past week.”

Adam gapes at her for a moment, before scrambling to catch up as she picks her way across the docks toward their ship.

The ship is loud.

Adam had known the ship was going to be loud, but *knowing* and experiencing are two entirely different things.

He hates it.

Beverly on the other hand had found a group of Americans who were also headed toward Hamunaptra. They are sponsored by a man by the name of Dr. Chilton and were playing a game of poker (which happens to Beverly’s specialty) when they walked in, so naturally she ends up sitting down with them to swindle them out of their money. Adam doesn’t approve nor condemn her actions, he’s just glad she’s happy. He frowns when she makes a bet with them over who would reach Hamunaptra first. Adam is certain that they will win, as they have Nigel and a half destroyed map, but evidently the Americans have someone with them who had apparently been there before too.

That someone turns out to be a man named Charlie, whom Nigel immediately threatens with a broken wine glass. Apparently they had been partners once (on the dig where Nigel had found the box), but when the Company they were with got attacked, Charlie had abandoned Nigel and escaped instead of staying to help him fight.

Adam doesn't like the story at all. It makes him uncomfortable listening to the tale of Nigel getting stabbed and left for dead, only to be saved by a woman by the name of Gabi whom he ended up marrying. It makes Adam’s stomach twist up into knots knowing that Nigel had been *married* to a woman, even if it had been years ago (and Nigel had since divorced her because she ended up cheating on him with Charlie of all people.)

Adam doesn’t like this Charlie on principle. He doesn’t like the way the mere mention of him makes Nigel bristle. Nigel is scary when he’s angry, and Adam doesn’t know how to reconcile the feelings of fear and arousal when Nigel is in that state. Not to mention the fact that Nigel *almost died* because of Charlie, and that if it hadn’t been for that, Nigel would

have never have been married. Not that that *really* matters, as Nigel's no longer married, (thanks, once again, to Charlie) but that is besides the point. Adam doesn't like Charlie.

In fact, Adam's dislike for Charlie runs so deep, he still can't quite figure out *why* Nigel's ex-wife would choose someone like Charlie over Nigel (not that he's complaining, because this leaves Nigel free to be pursued, because Adam is certainly *not* going to pursue a married man). Nigel is *clearly* the superior man between the two of them, anybody can see that. Beverly had laughed and made a snide comment about perhaps it was because Nigel is a thug, but Adam can't see it. Sure, Nigel is a little rough around the edges, but Nigel is *different.* Maybe it is because Adam actually *likes* Nigel, and Adam admittedly doesn't like a lot of people. People make him uncomfortable. They are usually too loud, and don't understand him. They find him strange and difficult to talk to, but not Nigel. He is comfortable around Nigel, even when Nigel is doing things that would normally make him extremely uncomfortable, like making prolonged eye contact or kissing him at random.

In fact, Adam will like it very much if Nigel decides to kiss him at random again (especially now that he is clean shaven). Unfortunately, Nigel had said that he had kissed him because he believed that he was going to die in an hour, and Adam has no idea if that means Nigel wouldn't be open to the idea of kissing him again outside of those parameters. Perhaps Adam needs to orchestrate another scenario in which Nigel might be facing imminent death again.

"There you are, gorgeous."

Adam startles, hands tightening in the camel's fur causing it to huff at him and bite at his hair. "Hello, Nigel."

"Quiet out here," Nigel observes, coming up next to him, leaning against the railing.

"Yes," Adam agrees, shifting away from the camels and closer to Nigel. His heart is pounding in his chest and hands are clammy. It's such a strange physiological response. He's nervous, and not quite sure *why* he's nervous, only that he is. Perhaps it's due to the proximity of a man he had just been fantasizing about kissing. "I like the quiet. Too much noise makes my head hurt, and I don't really like people."

"Oh," Nigel says softly, and Adam can hear him shifting away from him, feel the heat of him retreating. "Should I go?"

"No!" Adam screams frantically, turning to face him, fingers tapping against the taffrail. "I don't really like people, but I like you."

"Is that so?" Nigel asks, flashing him a smile that makes him feel weak in the knees and want to *do* things to him.

For a second, Adam sees flashes of someone else, some place else. Of chiseled olive skin and white robes. Of glistening halls of alabaster stone. His heart is still pounding in his chest, fingertips tingling. He wants to reach out and touch. To stroke that face which would put the gods to shame. He wants to feel the warmth of that skin underneath his hands, to taste those

lips again. Images overlap. Nigel and *him,* the boat and *that place.* Adam can feel it, that name on the tip of his tongue. *Imhannitep.*

The boat rocks and chaos is unleashed. There's screaming and suddenly a man is before them, reaching for the scimitar at his side as he snarls at Nigel. Nigel snarls back, mimicking his movements as he reaches for his pistol and Adam whines, hands flying to his head as he smacks his temples, trying to force the images from his mind.

Blood and fire and incessant screaming. Adam can hear the thumping of Pharaoh's guards. The pounding of their feet beating in time with his heart. They need to leave. The need to leave *NOW* . He grabs for Nigel's hand, but brushes air. Everything is wrong. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. He can smell the myrrh and cinnamon, saltwater and ash, and the cloying metallic sweetness of blood. He claws at his hair, anything to make it stop.

"Adam! Adam!"

Adam gasps, the boat comes back into focus, *Nigel* coming back into focus. The strange man is still there. There is blood running down the side of his face, but he is still there. Alive, and not actively trying to kill Nigel.

"Adam! Come on!" Beverly is tugging at him again, the boat is on fire.

"What?" Adam asks, choking on smoke. "What is going on?"

"Come on, gorgeous," Nigel says. Adam lets him move him, feels the weight of Nigel's hand against his nape. Suddenly he's pulled flush against Nigel, a hand on his hip as they're maneuvered toward the break in the rail. "Hope you can swim."

"Wait, what?" Adam asks, hands grabbing wildly at Nigel's shirt. "No, I can't! Don't let go, Nigel."

Nigel smiles at him in response. Adam knows this smile. He's had many a dream of *this* smile. His eyes slip close as Nigel kisses him. It's different than last time. It's soft, and gentle. *It's beautiful.* "I've got you, gorgeous," Nigel whispers against his lips, and then they're falling.

Adam comes to coughing up water in a panic. There's a voice inside his head screaming at him. The fall was too great, they weren't going to make it, but he is alive, and whole. There was some else with him. He had been falling in the arms of his beloved. They were escaping capture. Escaping death.

"Welcome back, gorgeous."

Adam's eyes snap to the man bent over him. It's *him.* Coughing up another mouthful of water Adam grabs at him, pulling himself up to a sitting position and buries his face in the man's shoulder. They had died. Or at the very least he thinks that a version of them had died. He is clearly alive, and so is Imhanni- no, *Nigel,* his brain provides belatedly.

"Nigel," Adam coughs against his shoulder. "We almost died. There was a cliff, and blood. So much blood. A spear had pierced your side, and my face…" he reaches a hand up to caress his unblemished cheek. The wound isn't there. There's supposed to be a gash there, where the knife sank in. He can still feel the agonizing pain as the blade pierced his flesh and knocked out his teeth. He can still taste the salty tang of his blood flooding his mouth.

He shudders against Nigel, curling in on himself as he tries to chase those images from his mind. Those *memories.* The visions are getting worse. They had never bled into his reality like this. Superimposed images until the two bled together and he could no longer make out who he is anymore.

Nigel cradles him close, murmuring words from a once lost language in his ear. He knows those words. He's heard them once before. Once upon a dream.

It is his favorite dream. The one where they are wrapped in soft cotton and heavy gold. Where the dogs surround them, sprawled around their feet as fingers and lips caress every inch of his body, worshiping his body like he is a work of art. Every touch ignites his nerve endings, until he feels so hot he might burst into flames. He welcomed every single kiss, and cries out in ecstasy as he is swallowed down but a hot, wet, mouth. The dream never lasts very long, as he is quickly overwhelmed by all the sensations and finds himself startling awake, his boxers a mess, and he feels sixteen again.

"Nigel," Adam moans against him, shivering from both the cold and his arousal, "Nigel, it's cold and I'm wet," *and I'm hard,* his brain adds, but he knows better than to voice that. Voicing his sexual excitement had never gone over well in the past, and he will like it if Nigel continues to hold him.

"That won't do." Nigel's breath is warm against his ear, but it doesn't stave off another full body shiver. "Let's get you warmed up and dry then, gorgeous."

Adam nods. Allows Nigel to pull him to his feet. He clings to Nigel, that residual fear of losing him still sitting heavy in his stomach. It'll be alright though, because Nigel is here. Real and alive, and *whole.* There is no bloody wound, no broken bones.

Charlie's voice pulls his attention from Nigel. A taunt about horses. Adam's glad the animals survived and doesn't understand why it matters that Charlie has all the horses. Nigel gets it though, because laughs. Drawing Adam closer, he presses a kiss to his temple before yelling back, "Hey Charlie, looks like you're in the wrong side of the river!"

Chapter End Notes

I have half of this written, and really hope that I don't lose steam as it's 100% plotted and *should* be about 6 chapters. We'll see, these boys tend to yeet on me and I have to add chapters.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Doth your eyes deceive you?

Nope. This is an update. Enjoy.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

On the dawn of the third day since the incident on the boat, Adam finds himself watching a city unfurl in the horizon. His heart beats in anticipation. *Hamunaptra.* Burial grounds of the Kings. City of his dreams.

The pull is there again, tugging at him, beckoning him. With a shrill whistle he kicks the camel into motion and then they're racing towards the ruins, Beverly and Nigel at his flanks and Charlie and his gang of Americans following close behind.

Beverly lets out a laugh, urges her camel on declaring that they'll win the bet. Adam has honestly forgotten all about the bet, all he knows is that he simply *must* make it there. He *must* find *him.*

Adam dismounts the moment he breeches the city ruins. There is a magic to the ruins he cannot explain, cannot deny. He wanders ancient city, his mind filling in the blanks, recreating its splendor. *City of the Dead. Resting place for Pharaohs and all their wealth. Resting place for Imhannitep.* Adam idly wonders if he would find him, the hero of his dreams. He’s not sure he even *wants* to anymore, although he still feels as if he *needs* to.

A week and a half ago, he would have given *anything* to chase after Imhannitep. To bring to life the visions which have plagued his dreams, his *fantasies,* for over a decade. Those dreams aren’t the same anymore though. They are tainted now, soaked in blood, and his fantasies, well his fantasies now all feature *Nigel.*

Nigel, who slides up behind him, arms slipping around his waist as he’s staring up at the statue of Anubis, his heart thrumming in his throat. Adam relaxes into the embrace, allows Nigel’s presence to envelope him, drowning out that incessant need to *find him.*

"We should find a suitable place around here to dig," Adam says, hands tapping idly against Nigel's.

"Any particular reason why?"

Adam nods, pulling away slightly, loosening Nigel's hold on him so he can turn to face the man. "This is the statue of Anubis," he says excitedly, "it's legs run deep underground. According to Bembridge scholars that's where we'll find a secret compartment containing the golden Book of Amun-Ra." He can't bring himself to say that the invisible force tugging at his heart has brought him to this spot, and the thing about the book, well that was also true.

Nigel laughs, but not unkindly as he reaches up to stroke the hair from Adam's eyes. "Sounds good to me, gorgeous."

"Okay," Adam says in a breathless whisper, shaking Nigel's hand from his face and surveys the area. If they had stayed like that, Adam has no doubt that he would have kissed Nigel again. And Adam knows that if he had kissed Nigel again, he would have never wanted to stop kissing Nigel, and he would forget all about *why* they were here. Forget all about Imhannitep and his curse, and his dreams and the visions.

"There you guys are!" Beverly exclaims as she makes her way up the hill to join them before the statue. "Anubis, eh?"

Adam nods as he follows Nigel up towards the farside of the statue, "according to Bembridge scholars, the Golden Book of Amun-Ra could be found-"

"Uh-huh," Beverly says, dismissing him with a wave of her hand, "I'm *sure* that's why we're here, and not because this would be where a particularly *naughty* man, say, someone who dared to murder a Pharaoh and run off with his consort, would be buried."

"That is pure speculation, Beverly," Adam admonishes, picking his way along the crumbling ruins. "We don't even know if the story of Imhannitep and Anck-Will-Namun is even real. Besides, even if it were, there's no guarantee that they would have buried his body here at the base of Anubis."

"Whatever you say, little bro."

Adam huffs, making to catch up with Nigel as quickly as he could. What does Beverly know. Just because he's been obsessed with Hamunaptra and Imhannitep since they were children *doesn't* mean that he's here specifically to look for the mummy of legend. He's a scholar and a librarian, and he's here to seek knowledge, *not* chase fantasies.

"Hey, I think this is a good spot," Nigel calls from about fifteen paces ahead, breaking Adam from his thoughts.

From what Adam could see, it is as good a spot as any to attempt to breach the ruins. The stones are bereft of sand on what looks like the top to one of the many temples. If they can breach it, they would drop down directly into the temple just beyond the base of Anubis.

When they finally drop into the hole, the air is stale and dusty, as to be expected from a room that no one has entered in over three thousand years. It is there again, that tugging feeling he

has felt since he first held the box that Beverly, no *Nigel* , had found. It is stronger now, like he is somehow getting closer to the source.

“This what you were looking for, gorgeous?" Nigel's breath is warm against his nape, and Adam silently wills him to pull him back into his arms.

"Yes, I think so," Adam replies, sweeping the torch around the room, attempting to get a better idea of where they are. The torch catches against a few objects, flashing a quick reflection of light. Adam squints at the objects, pushing the torch into Nigel's hand to clear cobwebs off what he is sure are mirrors. With a few pulls he finally gets one of the mirrors under the hole to swivel, catching the light streaming down and illuminating the room.

Adam’s breath catches the space is revealed. “Oh, my god. It's a sah-netjer.”

“A what now?”

“A sah-netjer," Adam repeats, "A preparation room."

"Preparation for what?"

"For entering the afterlife," Adam says with a broad smile.

“So where they stick that poker up your nose and swish it all about so they can pull your brains out?” Beverly asks with a slight shudder.

“Yes, but you would be already dead.”

“Still, sounds horrid.”

Adam shrugs fingers trailing across a long, flat surface. He can feel his heart thumping wildly in his chest. His hands tracing out the altar. He can see the candles, smell the myrrh and cassia, always with the myrrh. There is a body laid out, *his body,* surrounded by the delicate canopic jars housing his vital organs. Imhannitep is there, his priests chanting as he reads from *the book.* Adam knows the book, it is the Black Book, *the Book of the Dead.*

He gasps, ancient dust filling his lungs as the visions fall aways as the room comes back into focus. The altar is still there, beckoning him. Three thousand years, and time and decay has no hold over this place. It is different yet the same.

Adam shakes these thoughts, focuses back on Beverly and Nigel and *the present.* “Not any worse than embalming or burning the body to ash," he manages to say. "Mummification does the best job at actually preserving the body, though. It is utterly fascinating what a three thousand year old mummy looks like. Besides, it is a much more natural process, unlike modern day embalming, which mainly consists of pumping formaldehyde into the cadaver. It is terrible for the environment as the embalming fluid can seep into the ground and affect the surrounding soil and water ecosystems.”

“Fascinating,” Beverly says, and Adam knows her well enough to know that she doesn’t actually mean it. She in no way finds the topic *fascinating* and would very much like for him to move on from the topic.

“So,” Nigel says, saving Adam from actually having to change the subject. “Tell me more about this Book of Amun-Ra.”

“Oh,” Adam says breathlessly as Nigel draps an arm around his shoulders, pulling him close as they maneuver through the dark, narrow tunnel. He tries to collect his thoughts again, Nigel a solid, welcomed, *distracting* weight at his side despite how awkward and cumbersome the position is. “The Book of Amun-Ra… well, it is known colloquially as ‘the Book of the Living’ or ‘the Golden Book’ due to the fact that it is rumored to be made entirely of gold. That’s not why it’s so valuable, though. Well it *is* what makes it valuable *now,* but it’s true value is in the fact that is is a ritual book, said to contain ancient spells and incantations that could take life away from mortals.”

“‘Book of the Living’ that *takes* life away from mortals? Sound more like ‘the Book of the Dead.”

“Oh no,” Adam says, pouting slightly when Nigel has to pull his arm back so they could fit through the tunnel leading into the next room. “The Book of the Dead, actually *gives* life.”

“Kind of backwards don’t you think?” Beverly snorts from behind him.

“No, not really,” Adam says with a shake of his head. “The Book of Living deals with, well, the living, and the Book of the Dead subsequently deals with the Dead. You can only take life from something that is currently living, and can only give life to something already dead.”

Adam nearly walks into Nigel when the tunnel suddenly opens up into the next room and Nigel shushing him immediately. There is a distant rattling noise, a faint groaning echoing down from the opening on the other side of the room.

Nigel presses a pistol into Adam's hand, gestures for him to get behind him as they skirt the base of Anubis' legs, hugging the statue. The rattling gets closer, and Adam can hear the click of Nigel's gun being cocked.

"What is it?" Beverly whispers from behind him, her gun drawn as well.

Nigel shushes her with another wave of his hand as they clear the statue and find themselves face to face with the Americans, guns also drawn standing off with Nigel. "Oh, it's you fuckers," Nigel says, aiming his gun at Charlie.

"This is our site," Dr. Chilton jeers, his men rumbling their agreement with all their weapons trained on Nigel.

"Yeah, well we got here first."

"Not helping," Adam hisses at Beverly, shooting her a glare at her highly unnecessary input. It matters little that they reached the site first, because honestly, it's fifteen to three, and Adam doesn't even know how to shoot, so it's really more like fifteen to two, odds he does not want to bet against.

He frowns, feet shuffling as his eyes dart between Nigel and the fifteen guns pointed at his head. He hates this, unnecessary use of violence. Killing each other will *not* be of use to any of them. It will not get them closer to unearthing the secrets of this place, or give them fame and fortune.

The scattering of loose pebbles draws his attention, and he watches as they slip through the cracks by his feet. There is another layer to this place, a *downstairs*. If what he sought is truly buried under the statue of Anubis, all they had to do was dig it out from under it. “Nigel, it's okay."

"What? But you *wanted* this site, gorgeous," Nigel protests, cocking his gun.

"It's not worth *dying* over, Nigel."

"Yeah, you should listen to your little retard," Chilton sneers.

Adam's eyes flash. He swallows harshly before tugging at Nigel's arm. Nigel is tense. Every muscle in his body is flexed, ready to spring forward and decimate Dr. Chilton with his bare hands. Adam is flattered, no one (besides Beverly) has ever taken offense on his behalf. No one has ever *cared* before. "Come on, Nigel," he says, "they're not worth it. There's other places to dig."

Nigel looks like he wants to protest again, but relaxes slightly when Adam squeezes his arm again. Beverly shoots him a glare, clicks her tongue and follows his eyes down to the ground. He shifts his feet, kicking more pebbles into the crack and Beverly sighs.

"Come on boys," she says, lowering her weapon and pushing at Nigel's gun. "If we're going to share the dig site, we're going to have to learn how to play nice. No need for such violence, come on lover boy, like Adam said, plenty of other places to dig."

Nigel hesitates, but turns to reluctantly follow them back out of the tunnel. Adam waits until they're back in the sah-netjer to beam brightly at Nigel. "There's another room, underneath the statue. We can just dig out the treasure from under their feet."

"You devious little minx," Nigel exclaims with a laugh, turning to sweep Adam off of his feet and into his arms. "I think I'm going to keep you forever," he says when they stop spinning, and Adam is helpless to those words, to the feel of being held so securely in Nigel's arms.

"Yes, please," he says breathlessly, hands carding through Nigel's hair again as he pulls him back into a kiss.

Chapter End Notes

I apologise for basically never updating. I have the whole story plotted out. I'm just the world's slowest writer.

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